



SERVING THE SALISH REGION

KITSAP, JEFFERSON, AND CLALLAM COUNTIES

Big Medicaid Changes on the Horizon

The plan to combine both physical and behavioral health for Medicaid recipients is to begin on January 1st, 2020. The Salish BHO is on track to becoming a BH-ASO, which will administer the behavioral health side of the new integrated system. However, Salish BHO administrators warn that there will be changes to the system that may negatively impact residents or cause serious confusion.

Current enrollees of Medicaid will receive a disenrollment letter from their provider in October, then should expect a welcome letter to the MCO one month later. This does not mean that Medicaid recipients will be denied access to health care during this period. It is a realignment to place Medicaid enrollees into the new system. However, since there are several MCOs, and not all health care providers are contracted with all of the MCOs, families may lose access to their current doctor(s) and won't be in told until January.

There are concerns about cuts to the behavioral health system. Under the new system, providers say that they will have to spend more money on administrative costs due to increased billing and coding responsibilities. Providers will not receive extra funds to off-set these costs, and thus, some health care personal may be laid off or have their hours cut. Another area that will face drastic cuts will be to the non-Medicaid population. Crisis line services for non-Medicaid participants will face significant shortfalls.

Opioid Summit

The Third Annual Olympic Community of Health Opioid Response Summit took place on September 13th at the Suquamish House of Awakened Culture.

Dozens of health care providers, first responders, policy-makers, and community members attended the summit to address the opioid epidemic in the region.

The Salish region had 30 opioid overdose deaths in 2018. Prescription deaths in the region are on a downtrend, while heroin deaths have gone up significantly in the last couple of years. Thanks to outreach to prescribers, the prescriptions for opioids, especially those of high dosage, have gone down. Yet Clallam County's rates are still higher than the state average.

It is estimated that 324,000 Washingtonians misuse pain medication each year. While treatment options are expanding, there's not enough capacity to treat all Opioid Use Disorder sufferers in existing treatment facilities. One avenue explored during the summit was to push for legislation enabling methadone treatments in doctor's offices, which may reduce stigma and allow more individuals to get treatment near their home.

Upcoming Events

- Community Resource Network in Bremerton – Sept. 16, 10-12
- Olympic Region YMPEP Networking Meeting in Sequim – Sept. 19, 9:30-1
- Fore the Kids Golf Tournament in Sequim – Sept. 21, 9-12
- Midnight in Paris Fundraiser in Port Angeles – Sept. 21, 5-9
- Salish FYSRT Monthly Meeting – Sept. 30
- NAMI Washington Annual State Conference in Yakima – Oct. 4-5
- Kitsap Strong's Resiliency Summit in Bremerton – Oct. 4, 8-5
- Compassion Fatigue Workshop in Sequim – Oct. 5, 9-12
- Mental Health First Aid in Port Angeles – Oct. 14, 9-5:30

For details and more events visit www.salishfysprt.org/calendar